

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
MARCH 27, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: M. Evette Brantley, Chair; Lydia Martinez, Co-chair; Council President Thomas McCarthy, Martin McCarthy; Warren Blunt, Michelle Lyons (6:50 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brantley called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

The City of Bridgeport, through the City Council Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee, in accordance with its Citizen Participation Plan, will hold a Public Hearing to solicit citizen input on projects being proposed for funding under the Program Year 38 Community Development Block Grant Program including CDBG, ESG, HOME and HOPWA on Tuesday, March 27, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. (City Department applications).

Youth Service Bureau – Valerie Sorrentino – Ms. Sorrentino came forward and distributed a document to the Committee members. She explained that the matching portion of the request had increased due to an increase in benefits for the staff member.

Bridgeport Lead Free Families Program – Ms. Sabine Kuczo came forward and gave a very brief overview of what the Lead Free Families program does. The Lead Poisoning program identifies the children who have high levels of lead and refers the property owners to Ms. Kuczo's program which helps with the rebatement of the residences.

Senior Citizen Program – Department of Aging – Ms. Rosemary Hoyt, the Executive Director came forward and greeted the Committee. She gave a brief overview of the various programs offered by the department and distributed a copy of the April newsletter. The staff help with assisting the seniors in filling out forms, instructing seniors on the use of the exercise equipment, scheduling and implementing the various programs.

R.S.V.P. Program – One of the volunteers came forward and gave a brief overview of the program and how the volunteers assist the seniors.

Council Member Michelle Lyons joined the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Lighthouse Program – Mayor’s Conservation Corps - Mr. Willie Murphy from the Mayor’s Conservation Corps program came forward and gave an overview of the program where the students work with the residents on learning about conservation. He said that he would appreciate if the City Council would support the program so that they could expand.

Tree Planting Program – Mr. Steven Layton, Special Project Coordinator for the Parks Dept. came forward. Copies of a PowerPoint program were distributed to the Committee members. Mr. Layton said that there has been work on coordinating with the Conservation Corps and now there are programs such as Adopt A Tree that the residents can participate in. The B-Green Beautification program youth also works with the Tree Planting program to beautify the parks.

OPED - NRZ – B-green Project – Ms. Saltero and a number of NRZ members and students from the various programs came forward. Copies of a flyer were distributed to the committee members. Both Murals and some green spaces were created and also been trash cans purchased.

There were some students from Bassick present to briefly address the Committee about the beautification projects. One of the students pointed out that Bridgeport’s appearance effects how people view Bridgeport. Ms. Saltero said that there were over 200 students who were working all over the City.

Council Member Lyons asked for clarification on the program. Ms. Saltero said that the funding request was for buying supplies for the various project.

Neighborhood Safety Project – Ms. Saltero gave an overview of the volunteer project where the students and others go around and do some painting and distribute information about public safety. One of the projects has been providing house numbers for the residences in the City. It helps both the police and the fire department.

Public Parks Improvements – Mr. Stephen Layton came forward and explained that the Parks Master Plan had recommended forming partnerships with other groups to offer better services to the residents. One issue is having the parks accessible to all. He then listed a number of park improvements that had been done last year, along with a list of the planned improvements for the coming year.

Senior Leisure & Healthy Lifestyle - Ms. Luanne Konine came forward and said that her department had been working with the Department of Aging. Last year, fitness equipment was brought into the Eisenhower Senior Center and the seniors love it. The exercise makes the seniors feel young and helps them stay healthy. Council Member

Martinez said that she was a member at the Eisenhower Center and the program was excellent.

Council Member Lyons asked a question about the membership requirements. Ms. Konine said that it was for 55 years and up. She said that her department was grateful. Council member Brantley asked if the Eisenhower Center provides transportation. Ms. Konine said that the Center does have a bus but most arrive by other means.

Veterans Food Pantries. – A staff member came forward and said that the Food Pantry was requesting \$10,000. The pantry serves the disabled veterans and their families. It is a program geared specifically for veterans. Council Member wished to know what the hours were and where the location was.

Council President McCarthy said that the Food Pantries now had more HUD regulations regarding street outreach and training was required. Ms. McDermott gave more details about how these regulations would be implemented.

Health Department – Disabilities – The request for \$30,000 is for a salary. Ms. McDermott explained that the salaries were now separated out from the supplies and materials, so the total request was for \$46,000

East Side Senior Center – Program Request – Copies of a letter were distributed to the Committee members that explained the \$40,000 for the rent of the site and the program expenses for \$20,000. The Center is open from 9-4 Monday thru Friday. The \$20,000 will cover salary for staff and supplies.

Council Member Martinez asked if this was the first request for salary funding. Ms. McDermott said that last year, there was a request for \$5,000.

Code Enforcement Restoration – Ms. Iris Molina, the Director of Social Services came forward and said that the request was for Emergency Relocation funding for the residents who suffer a fire or other reasons why they can no longer occupy their residence. The State mandates that the cities and towns provide this service to their residents.

Council Member Blunt then stated that the Department does a wonderful job and the staff are available when needed.

Council Member Martinez asked about the break out of the salaries. Ms. McDermott indicated where the information was found on the application. The department also offers more services than just the Emergency Relocation assistance.

Landlord Tenant Service – Ms. Iris Molina then reviewed the various aspects of the services offered by the Department for both the landlord and tenants. The more education that the landlords and tenants have about these issues, the easier it is for them to know how to handle issues.

Housing Code Enforcement – Copies of information were distributed to the Committee members. Mr. Freddino came forward and explained that Mr. Paoletto could not attend the meeting. He said that HUD had determined areas in the city where the inspections were to be done. Mr. Freddino then inspects the buildings and notes when rehabilitation is needed.

NRZ Public Facilities Program – Ms. Saltero came forward and said that the project was to earmark funds for neighborhood projects. It is a collaboration of the various NRZs who meet together once a month. Last year, the East End did not have a shovel ready project, so they have a priority project this year. Ms. Saltero then gave a brief run down on the various projects that are planned for the coming year.

Council President McCarthy asked about the amount. Ms. Saltero said that the NRZs had scaled back some of the projects and had removed items such as the request for deco lighting on the various streets.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program – Ms. Audrey Gains came forward and explained that her department does inspections in the homes and also tests the children for high lead levels. The information packets contained a study about the various percentage the cities had in their children.

Council Member Lyons asked for clarification on the figures. Ms. McDermott gave her the information

Business Development Fund – Mr. Bill Kolman came forward and said that he would be speaking about two programs: the Store Front Improvement program and the Business Loan Fund. The two funds have been used for various businesses in downtown Bridgeport. Right now the intersections of Fairfield and Main, Main and John and the former Rite Aid building are among the four corners in the focus, particularly in terms of the roll down grates.

Regarding the Business Loan fund, these funds are used to help businesses that are starting up, such as the mattress recycling company.

Council Member Martinez asked about a business on East Main Street and the matching funding. Mr. Kolman explained that the Bond Commission had set up some

requirements and the City had to go back to the State for permission to change the requirements for the program.

Council Member McCarthy asked if the roll down prohibition was just city wide. Mr. Kolman said that it was only downtown, but would check to verify. Council Member McCarthy said that he would like to see it be extended citywide.

Council Member Lyons said that she would like to see a report of the results where the projects have been completed. Mr. Kolman said that he would get that information to her.

Council Member Brantley asked why the City hadn't addressed the issues when Rite Aid was there rather than now that it was closed. Mr. Kolman said that there were some issues working with a national chain, but the City is now trying to work with owners rather than being left with a problem.

Council Member Martinez asked about some of the figures. Mr. Kolman then reviewed these details with her.

NRZ Support Services – Ms. Saltero said that this request was to provide administrative services to the various groups. This will supplement the interns who are provided to the City at no cost by the universities and provide supplies for publications.

Council Member Brantley asks who is doing this work. Ms. Saltero said she was. Council Member Brantley said that there were events that the Council Members were having and wondered if this information should be passed along to her. Ms. Saltero said said that she would pass the information along to the NRZs.

NRZ Planning Grant – Ms. Saltero said that this was to begin the NRZ process in the Reservoir Avenue area. Last year, it was applied for, but there was no funding.

Council President McCarthy left at 7:50 p.m.

One of the group members came forward and said that the group was interested in getting the assistance of the Council to get a consultant for the report. Council Member Brantley then asked about the process. Ms. Saltero reviewed the various steps that were mandated by the State for NRZs. Council Member Brantley asked what would change if there was an NRZ in place. The NRZ member explained how the City had put in some sidewalks by the Food Bazaar, but stopped about 100 yards before completing the projects. There are no lights in those areas. These are issues that the NRZ would address.

Council Member Blunt asked for information on how the projects were developed. Ms. Saltero related the various steps that the groups go through in determining what projects would be done and how they would be done.

Council Member Brantley asked about how the boundaries are determined. Ms. Saltero said that the consultant determines the boundaries by using various

**CDBG – CDBG Administration
CDBG - Housing Program Delivery program,
CDBG - HESG Administration; and
CDBG - HOPWA program**

Ms. McDermott came forward and gave an overview of the administrative request and what it covers, including providing the staff, stenographers, and mandatory requirements. There are significant cuts from last year and she requested that this be considered for the full amount.

She also reviewed the details of the Housing Program Delivery program, the HESG Administration, and HOPWA program.

CDBG - Housing Rehabilitation Loans Program - Ms. Miro came forward and distributed copies of a booklet that she created. These Housing Rehabilitation Loans are given to those homeowners who can not afford to deal with issues such as antiquated electrical wiring, deteriorating roofs, and windows that need to be replaced.

Council Member Brantley asked if this was a grant program or a loan. Ms. Miro said that it was a grant. The amounts are based on both income and area. Council Member Brantley asked what the income cap was. Ms. McDermott said that HUD changes the limits each year and that the information would be sent to the Committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

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